

Town Manager's Newsletter

October 2021



Jodi Ross, Town Manager

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October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month



Special Town Meeting Saturday, October 16, 1 PM Westford Academy Trustees Field (Rain Date: Sunday, October 17, 10AM)

Styrofoam Collection Saturday, October 23 9 AM to 2 PM Highway Garage 28 North Street



Dear Westford residents,

Our Fall Special Town Meeting will be held this Saturday, October 16th, at 1:00 PM, outside at the Westford Academy Trustees Field located at 30 Patten Road. We encourage you to arrive a half an hour early to allow time for check-in. In the event of inclement weather, the meeting may be continued to Sunday, October 17th at 10:00 AM. If the weather is in question, please check our website for notice if the meeting has been continued at www.westfordma.gov. Our warrant is brief for this town meeting, and as such we are a bit concerned with obtaining a quorum of 200 voters. If we do not reach quorum, the meeting may not commence. Therefore, I am making a special request to do your best to attend. There are several critical, time-sensitive articles and below is a summary of the 9 warrant articles:

- Funding the first year of the FY22-24 Firefighter/EMT/Paramedic's collective bargaining agreement (very important to consider, especially during the pandemic)
- Reinstating a part time position in the Treasurer/Collector's office (the employee retired last year and due to COVID, we did not replace her)
- Providing funding for the design of a new desperately needed HVAC system in our Cameron Senior Center (this building also serves as an emergency warming/cooling station for our residents)
- Replacing the Rogers Fire Station roof (it's leaking)
- Funding the design of a replacement well on Depot St
- Reimbursing our town's Capital Stabilization Fund with proceeds from the sale of 63 Main Street
- Designing the roof replacement for our Blanchard School (which is also in desperate need of replacement)
- Allowing us to begin using our new electric vehicle charging stations at town hall, various schools, and other public buildings
- Allowing the Recycling Commission to continue and expand their current initiatives
- Establishing a Health Insurance Trust Fund (which we believe will save our town and our employees significant health insurance costs)
- Funding an energy savings performance audit, which will allow us to complete energy-related projects in both our town and school buildings (saving valuable energy and associated costs)
- Approving the Byrne Place Extension for our residents who reside on that street (and would like their betterment approved)
- Consider restricting motorboats on Keyes Pond (delayed from our annual town meeting)

We do believe the meeting business will be conducted quickly and everyone may resume their Saturday plans. If we do not reach quorum, we will need to continue the meeting to another day. To review all Town Meeting documents, please visit the following link: 2021 Special Town Meeting.

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Town Manager's Newsletter (continued)

At their September 28th meeting, the Select Board approved the 2023 Budget Policy Direction which is available at the following link: <u>Select Board Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Policy Direction</u>.

The Select Board held a special meeting on Tuesday, October 5th, as a continuation from their meeting on September 28th, to discuss the Department of Public Works' request to receive authorization to submit 75% design on the Boston Road Rehabilitation Project and discuss any resident concerns. Steve Cronin, Director of Public Works, Paul Starratt, Town Engineer, and Jonathan Rockwell, TEC Inc., Project Manager, presented their plans and possible solutions to residents' concerns. After consideration, and hearing from abutters, the board approved the 75% design plan with modifications for traffic calming including the following:

- Flush-mountable median islands
- Speed feedback signs
- Solid green painted bike lanes
- Thickly settled designation
- Cobblestones in the crosswalk at the top of Boston Road and in the medians
- Increased police presence

Select Board Member Hazleton offered to work with the neighborhood to explore Farm Lane for use as an additional pathway for pedestrians and bicyclists.

On October 12th, the Select Board received an update from the Clean Energy and Sustainability Committee and their recommendations on achieving Westford's net zero greenhouse gas emissions goal by 2050. The Committee will be conducting a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory which will include a survey of current community-wide GHG emissions, inclusive of those from energy, buildings, transportation, land use, and waste. The Select Board thanked the Committee for their hard work to date and requested they return when the survey is complete and road map is approved.

At the same meeting, the Select Board considered the process for determining the prioritization of uses of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The Select Board asked the Town Manager's Office to reach out to other towns about whether they are considering hazard pay for certain town employees, and to resend to the Board and Committees questions related to their suggestions for use of the funds. For more details relative to the specific process of determining the prioritization of use of funds, please see the following link: Request for American Rescue Plan Act Funding.

On Thursday, November 11th, there will be a Veterans Day Ceremony to honor all who have served our country. The ceremony will commence at 11:00 AM on Town Common. Veterans who wish to march may assemble behind the J.V. Fletcher Library located at 50 Main Street at 10:30 AM. In the event of inclement weather, the ceremony will be moved inside to the old fire station located at 51 Main Street and the parade cancelled.

With Deputy Fire Chief Dan Britko's anticipated retirement effective November 30, 2021, I am delighted to announce the promotion of Fire Captain Michael Denehy as our new Deputy Fire Chief effective December 1, 2021. Please join me in sending a sincere thank you and best wishes to Dan, for a happy, healthy retirement, and congratulations to Mike on his promotion. Please note the Board of Health issued a directive effective October 1st: face coverings are required for all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, in all public indoor spaces. For more information, please see their statement at the following link: Statement from the Westford Board of Health regarding face coverings.

The Health Department is offering a drive-through flu clinic at the Westford Water Department located at 60 Forge Village Road on Thursday, October 28th from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged by using the following link: Westford Flu Clinic Pre-Registration.

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Town Manager's Newsletter (continued)

There are several openings on our local boards and committees, including: 35 Town Farm Road Task Force, Affordable Housing Trust, Agricultural Commission, Clean Energy and Sustainability Committee, Commission on Disability, Communications Advisory Committee, Cultural Council, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, Dog Park Task Force, Economic Development Committee, Election Officer, Healthy Westford Committee, Parkerville Schoolhouse Committee, Parks, Grounds and Recreation Commission, Pedestrian Safety Committee, Permanent Town Building Committee, Recycling Commission, Senior Low Income Disabled Tax Relief Committee, Westford Scholarship and Grant Committee, and Zoning Board of Appeals. I urge you to peruse our website for information about the work of these committees; and if you have interest, please complete a Citizen's Activity form at this link: Citizen Activity Form.

Would you like more detailed information on the Select Board's meetings? Click the following links to access: Select Board Documents & Select Board Meeting Videos.

I hope to see you this weekend at our Special Town Meeting!

Sincerely,

Jodi Ross Town Manager





Celebration of the sign raising for the Helena Crocker Residences aka "Mickey's Place". It will be home to 18 seniors in need of affordable housing. Yesterday David Hedison of CHOICE, Nancy Cook of our Council on Aging, and several town staff and residents surprised Mickey Helena Crocker at the site of the soon to be constructed Helena Crocker residences, which will provide homes for 18 or our seniors, and is a project made possible by State funding, our Westford Community Preservation Funds, and our Westford Affordable Housing Trust. Mickey was overwhelmed with gratitude to be honored by the dedication of this project to her, thanking her for her countless hours of volunteering through the years to help our seniors and elderly residents.

The Cameron Senior Center welcomes all adults ages 55+ for daily programs and services.

Mission Statement: The Council on Aging promotes physical, emotional and economic well-being of older adults in all realms of community life.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY:

The Cameron follows the same inclement weather procedures as Town Hall. For information please go to https://westfordma.gov or simply call the center at 978-692-5523 after 6:30AM to receive current information on delay/closure.

COVID Update: Due to public health guidance around COVID and its variants, Cameron programs may be changed, postponed or cancelled at any time. If changes should occur your COA staff will notify you as soon as possible. All people must wear masks in public buildings, regardless of vaccination status.. Thanks for your cooperation! Let's all stay healthy this year! We strongly encourage you to make your event attendance decisions based on the most up-to-date public health guidelines. Thanks for your understanding!

BIRTHDAY LUNCH CELEBATION TOGETHER

Wednesday, October 20 12:30

Menu: Kentucky Fried Chicken with those favorite sides: coleslaw, mashed potatoes and/or baked beans and a biscuit. Oh, we can't forget cake and ice cream, too. Come see your friends and celebrate our October birthdays. Cost: \$5 and in honor and appreciation of our birthday celebrants your meal is complimentary. Please sign up at 978-692-5523.



BACK AGAIN, BETTER THAN EVER, WITH NO OTHER THAN WESTFORD'S TRIVIA KING, KEN CLOUGH

Tuesday, October 26, 5:30-7:30pm

Join us for our annual trivia night. Doors open at 5:30 with a choice of dessert selections and trivia to follow shortly at 6PM. We have a new method for team selection. Many new bonus games, questions, and there will be door prizes and prizes for the champion team! All this for \$3.00. Sign up quick so you don't miss the fun. Please RSVP to 978-692-5523.

Card and Board Games

Enjoy an afternoon(s) playing with Cameron Friends especially as the weather gets cooler. Just come!

BRIDGE Thursdays at 3pm

CRIBBAGE Wednesdays at 12:30

HAND AND FOOT (Canasta) Thursdays at 12:30pm

DROP-IN SCRABBLE?

Are you interested in drop-in Scrabble? Please call Katie at 978-399-2330. If there is enough interest, we'll schedule a weekly game time!



To view the complete Council On Aging Newsletter please visit our website at: www.westfordma.gov/coa and click on Newsletters.





Westford Senior Center

Cameron Happenings Continued...

EVERY MONDAY at 1PM and Thursday evenings at 6:30PM

Join us at the Cameron for some BINGO Fun! \$1 for a colored dob-

ber which you get to keep. \$3 per paper BINGO sheet which includes three BINGO boards. For ages 19+ Light refreshments, much fun but please don't forget to register by calling 978-692-5523.

BINGO/HOT DOG/BURGER Thursday, October 28, 4:45-6:00 pm, Please Note New Prices

Due to popular demand, hotdogs and burgers will be served the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month before BINGO. A hot dog, chips, drink, and dessert setup is \$4.00. A hamburger/cheeseburger set up is \$5.00 and it is \$6 for a hotdog and burger combo. An extra hotdog is \$1, an extra burger is \$2. Simply pay at the front desk when you arrive. BINGO starts at 6:30PM.

HEALTH SCREENINGS AND INFORMATION

WESTFORD HEALTH DEPARTMENT OFFERS BLOOD PRESSURE & MORE

Tuesdays November 9 and December 14 at 9 AM

Meet with Gail Johnson, the Town's Public Health Nurse Health screenings including: blood pressure reading, medication review, weight check, and an opportunity to discuss other concerns.

HEARING SCREENING

Mondays, November 8 and December 13 at 9:30 a.m.

Dr. Megan Ford from HearSmart Audiology of Littleton, will

provide hearing assessments. Sponsored by the Westford Health Department. To book your appointment call the Health Department at 978-692-5509.

FALLON HEALTH MEDICARE PRESENTATION

Wednesday, November 3 at 12pm

Circle your calendar for the 2022 Fallon Health Plan Review. Our Fallon representative, Bill Bjerke, will be here to discuss "What's new for '22". Please sign up at 978-692-5523.

NEED ASSISTANCE WITH MEDICARE?

Mondays, November 1, 8, 22, 29 and December 13

BY APPOINTMENT

SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) CAN HELP!

Certified SHINE counselors offer free, unbiased,

confidential counseling on all aspects of health insurance to

anyone on or eligible for Medicare. You may benefit from

cost-savings programs that a SHINE counselor will explain to you. Your health insurance costs are an important part of your budget, and SHINE is available all year to help you review your plans and costs.

Medicare Open Enrollment is coming!

Medicare health and drug plans can make changes each year, such as cost, coverage, and what providers and pharmacies are in their networks. October 15th to December 7th is when all people with Medicare can change their Medicare health plans and prescription drug coverage for the following year to better meet their needs. The SHINE Program can help you determine the best plan for you through individual meetings with a trained SHINE Counselor, **Fred Baumert.** To schedule an appointment, contact the Cameron Senior Center Front Desk at 978-692-5523. This is a busy time of year, so please schedule early. You will be asked to complete a Medication Form prior to your appt. and have your Medicare Card available. At this writing, appointments will be in person and if only if requested by remote/ telephone.

INTRODUCTION TO MEDICARE

The SHINE program is also offering multiple Informational Sessions via Zoom. Call 1-800-243-4636 to sign up for a slot.



October at the J.V. Fletcher Library

Unless otherwise noted, the following programs are made possible by the Friends of the Library.

Please Consult the Library Website and Social Media for any changes to these programs resulting from COVID impact.



Virtual Friends of the Library Annual Meeting – Featuring Author E. Dolores Johnson: Wednesday, November 17 at 7:00 PM:

In "Say I'm Dead", Dolores Johnson writes about the mixed race experience in America, focused on black-white unions and inspired by her family's experiences. In 1942 her black father and white mother fled Indiana's Klan and anti- miscegenation laws to legally marry in New York, 24 years before the Supreme Court made mixed-race marriage legal. "Say I'm Dead" is a memoir of secrets, separation, and transformation, chronicling four generations who overturned forbidden race-mixing norms amid America's persistent bigotry. A brief business meeting of Friends members will precede the program. Register for this program through the Library Events Calendar. A Zoom invite will be emailed to guest when they register and shortly before the program date in a reminder message. For more information, visit: www.westfordlibraryfriends.org

Snap Circuits for Grades 3-5: Friday, October 15 3:30-4:30 p.m.in the Meeting Room. Explore and play with our Snap Circuits kits and make connections that whir, spin, light up, move, and buzz! We own a variety of kits: R/C Car, Green Energy, Motion, Light, Arcade, 3-D Illumination, and Snap Circuits Junior for beginners. Please register online through the Library **Events Calendar**

Tween and Teen Make and Take Crafternoon: Monday, October 18, 3:30 to 4:30 PM Join us in the Meeting Room to make your own mini monster book or spell book, and decorate a pumpkin! This program is for kids in grades 5-12. No registration is required.

Blanchard Middle School Book Club: October 19 and every third Tuesday 2:00 to 3:00 PM: JV Fletcher YA Librarian, Jess, joins the Blanchard Middle School librarian and students after school in the Learning Commons. We'll discuss a different book each meeting along with related crafts and activities.

NEW Chess Club: Sat., October 23 from 1:00 to 3:00 PM For kids in grades 3 to 5 who are interested in playing chess and who already know the basic moves, or are an advanced player. Drop in and find an opponent (or bring one with you). We provide the game sets, you bring the challenge. Space is limited to 40 players (that is how many sets we have). You are welcome to bring your own pieces if you prefer. This program is generously funded by the Friends of the J.V. Fletcher library. Program takes place in the Meeting Room unless otherwise noted; register through the <u>Library Events Calendar</u>. Caregivers must remain in the building for kids under age 10.

Virtual Pajama Story Time: Monday, October 25 at 6:30 p.m.: Pajama Time meets once a month on a Monday evening for children ages 3 to 7. Register for each night separately up to 6 pm. Get into those pajamas and grab a favorite stuffed animal or blanket and Zoom in. Please register through the <u>Library Events Calendar</u>.

Virtual Let's Draw Monsters Cartooning Program, Thursday October 28, 2021 at 3:30pm. Award-winning cartoonist Rick Stromoski will show you how to draw creatures, goblins, ghosts, and all things Halloweeny! This program is for kids in grades 5 and up. Please register for this Zoom program through the <u>Library Events</u> Calendar.

OUTSIDE Toe Jam Halloween Spooktacular: Saturday, October 30 at 2:30 PM: It is a trick or treat party full of Toe Jammy fun, music, and monsters. For ages 4 and up with their caregivers (older kids are more than welcome too). There is no rain or weather date for this program.

Virtual When Getting Along Is Not Enough: Thursday, October 28 at 7:00 p.m. Join Dr. Maureen Walker, a licensed psychologist, speaker, educator and writer who helps people bridge cultural differences such as race, religion, gender and other social status markers for this important information session. Dr. Walker will speak about her book, *When Getting Along is Not Enough: Reconstructing Race in Our Lives and Relationships*. Please register through the <u>Library Events Calendar</u>. Questions? Email Sarah Regan at sregan@westfordma.gov.

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October at the J.V. Fletcher Library (Continued)

Stony Brook Middle School Book Club: November 3 and every first Wednesday 2:00 to 3:00 PM: JV Fletcher YA Librarian, Jess, joins the Stony Brook Middle School librarian and students after school in the school library. We'll discuss a different book each meeting along with related crafts and activities. (Remember to bring your library card to the first meeting!)

Virtual DIY Chinese Herbal Medicine: Thursday November 4 at 7:00 p.m.: Chinese herbs have been utilized in Asian cultures for over 5,000 years. The fundamental idea of living in harmony with nature and the environment forms the basis for the use of Chinese herbs as well as the traditional Chinese approach to health. Knowledge of this healing power has been passed down from generation to generation, and is one of China's greatest gifts to mankind. Acupuncturist, herbalist and Qigong master Dr. Deguang He will give this talk, in both English and Chinese, about the healing power of Chinese herbs and herbal remedies. Please register through the <u>Library Events Calendar</u>. Questions? Email Sarah Regan at sregan@westfordma.gov.

Tales and Tunes: Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.: This weekly musical story time for infants to kids up to age 3. Join us as we share music, instruments, and books in this musical program. Caregivers attend with the child. This live, in person story time takes place in the Story Hour room. Please register through the <u>Library Events</u> Calendar

Wiggles and Giggles: Mondays at 1:15 p.m.: This is a weekly story time for kids ages 3 to 5 that is exactly how is sounds - full of fun, silly stories and activities. Caregivers can stay in the room or wait in the children's room. This live, in person story time takes place in the Story Hour room. Please register through the <u>Library</u> Events Calendar

Mother Goose Story Times: Every Monday and Thursday at 10:30 a.m. Mother Goose is a twice weekly, drop-in story time for babies and preschoolers with their parents. We hope one of the two offerings per week will fit into your busy preschool schedule. This program meets on Mondays (Sept. 27 – Dec.6) and Thursdays (Sept. 23 – Dec. 9) **outside** while and when weather permits. Please plan to sign up so that we can send you a Zoom link if the weather prevents us from meeting in person. We will move inside to Zoom once the weather becomes too cold for outside. Please register for each session through the **Library Events Calendar**.

<u>Virtual Westford Job Seekers:</u> The J. V. Fletcher Library's "Westford Job Seekers Network" meets weekly on Wednesdays from 3:00 - 4:30 PM. Attracting people of diverse work backgrounds and age groups, this group helps you expand your network of business contacts, discover new job opportunities and connect with others who are in job transition and can become part of your support group. Meetings include guest speakers who are experts in the job search process or in career development. Contact Dina Kanabar, dkanabar@westfordma.gov for more information.

Monday Mystery, Adult Non Fiction, Thursday Night Book Club: All of our adult book clubs welcome new members. Please visit <u>westfordlibrary.org/events/adult-book-clubs/</u> for more information, reading lists, and upcoming meeting dates!

Virtual Qigong Class: every Mon. from 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM Dvora Eisenstein leads this free recurring Qigong class on Zoom. Qigong is an ancient Chinese health care system integrating slow movements, breathing techniques, and focused intention. Qigong calms your mind, improves your balance, and enhances health. Suitable for all levels of ability and ages. Anyone may join at any time. Hosted and sponsored by the Sunderland Public Library and made available to all Westford residents. To join, use this Zoom link: https://zoom.us/j/117278043



Check out our <u>Museum Passes page</u> or call the Library for reservations. Unless otherwise noted, our museum passes are generously funded by the Friends of the Library. <u>Have you joined the Friends yet?</u>

Quick Links to Our Most Popular Services!

Book Bundles for Kids, Teens, and Adults

Programs - Adults

Programs - Kids

Programs – Young Adults

If you have questions or need assistance, please call us at 978-399-2300 or send us an email at westfordma.gov.

Leaves & Yard Waste

Did You Know?

Leaves, grass clippings, and other yard wastes can become stormwater pollutants if not properly managed. Yard wastes that get washed into storm drains introduce fertilizers and excess nutrients (like nitrogen and phosphorus) into our streams, ponds, and lakes which can be harmful.



This FALL please do the following to protect our waters:

- ✓ Rake or blow your leaves away from roads, sidewalks, and driveways
- ✓ Compost yard wastes and mulch leaves into your lawn for natural fertilizer
- √ Keep storm drains clear of leaves to prevent flooding.











Clean Energy and Sustainability Committee

It's Easy To Go 100% Renewable!

The Town of Westford offers a 100% renewable electricity option through Westford POP (our town's program with more electricity supply options for residents and businesses). It's really easy to sign up - takes less than five minutes. No greenwashing, no gimmicks. You can see the rates and all the details on the program website: masscea.com/ Westford.

National Grid has announced their new rates effective November 1, higher than all Westford POP options that are fixed until 2023, so this is an especially good time to make the switch! I hope you will join me and sign up today to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and move us toward a sustainable future.

Have you filled out the Westford Survey on Climate Change?

If not, <u>please take a few minutes to do so now</u>. Help shape our town's strategy to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions. This survey will help guide the Net Zero Roadmap committee as we plan for renewable and sustainable practices.

Learn more about our Net Zero Plan here.

Thank you for your participation and commitment to a better Westford.

Learn more about our committee here:

https://westfordma.gov/299/Clean-Energy-and-Sustainability-Committee

Recycling Commission

Thanks for a Successful Electronics and More Collection on September 25th



Thanks to everyone who brought in their used electronics and other items to be recycled.

Collected at the September event were:

14,260 lbs of Metal

10,510 lbs of Electronics -

This included 94 TVs, 88 Monitors, 22 Speakers, 1,877lbs of Co-mingled Material, 143lbs of Alkaline Batteries, 10 Vacuums and 1 Car Seat

Great job by everyone!

Rotary Club's Plastic Collection Ended on October 10th

The Westford Rotary Club TREX Plastic collection ended on Sunday the 10th. Collection sites were the Roudenbush Community Center, Brookside Convenience Store and Cameron Senior Center.

Rotary met its max collection of plastic - 5000 pounds! That is 5000 pounds in just 6 months, and they thought they were going to have a problem collecting the 500 pounds needed for just one bench in 6 months.

We all use too much PLASTIC!!! It can only be put in the trash now. We all need to start thinking how we all can reduce the use of plastic in our lives.

Thank you to everyone that donated, and to Whole Foods for their support.

Rotary received its first TREX bench last week; it needs to be put together and have the plaque added. It will be presented to Roudenbush Community Center Playground in the near future. The Westford Rotary can only receive a TREX bench every 6 months, so in the future we will receive 9 more benches for Westford for other locations. If you have a location that might be considered, let Westford Rotary know.

Upcoming Event:

STYROFOAM COLLECTION SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 9 A.M. TO 2 P.M. WESTFORD HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT, 28 NORTH STREET

FOR WESTFORD RESIDENTS.

ACCEPTED:

#6 (EPS) – pre-formed packing, insulation board, and coolers

#4 (EPS) – spongy foam expanded polystyrene

NOT ACCEPTED: Styrofoam food containers, including cups, meat trays, and packing peanuts.

HELPFUL if you can bring items in a large carboard box (OK if not full) or a larger plastic bag in order to facilitate our transportation.

Sponsored by First Parish Church United, Westford. Donations will be accepted to defray the cost for transporting Styrofoam to Gold Circuit in Palmer, MA.

